



Commodity Specification

CHICKEN FAJITA STRIPS

DECEMBER 2000



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I. GENERAL

Frozen, fully cooked, dark chicken fajita strips (commodity) produced under this Specification will be packaged and packed in the following form as specified in the contract:

Chicken Fajita Strips (226030) - Frozen, fully cooked, dark chicken fajita strips, produced from ready-to-cook boneless, skinless drumsticks, thighs, and/or legs. The commodity will be packaged 5 or 10 pounds (2.27 or 4.54 kg) per plastic-film bag to a net weight of 30 pounds (13.61 kg) in each fiberboard shipping container. A purchase unit will consist of 1,300 shipping containers totaling 39,000 pounds (17,690 kg).

The name of the commodity is “chicken fajita strips,” and the description of the commodity is “strips of whole muscle dark chicken meat with grill markings.”

II. COMMODITY SPECIFICATIONS

A. Basic Requirements

1. Date Processed. The commodity must not be processed prior to the date of the contract.

2. Class. The commodity must be prepared from freshly slaughtered broiler/fryer chickens (9 C.F.R. part 381 or AMS § 70.201(c)) or parts (AMS § 70.210).

3. Origin of Chickens. The commodity must be produced and processed from chickens which were produced, raised, and processed in the United States, its territories or possessions, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands. If the contractor processes or handles chicken products originating from sources other than the United States, its territories or possessions, Puerto Rico, or the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands, the contractor must have an acceptable identification and segregation plan for those chicken products to ensure they are not used in the commodity produced under this Specification. This plan must be made available to a representative of the Grading Branch, Poultry Programs, AMS, USDA (grader), and the Contracting Officer or agent thereof upon request. The contractor must ensure that both the contractor and subcontractor(s) maintain records such as invoices, or production and inventory records evidencing product origin, and make such records available for review by the USDA grader or other Government official(s) in accordance with Article 76 of USDA-1.

II.A.

4. Inspection. Processing operations must comply with Poultry Products Inspection Regulations (9 C.F.R. part 381) and be under the supervision of a representative of USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) (inspector). Inspection for contract and Specification compliance will be in accordance with the Regulations Governing the Voluntary Grading of Poultry Products and Rabbit Products (7 C.F.R. part 70) and the U.S. Classes, Standards, and Grades for Poultry (AMS 70.200 *et seq.*) under the supervision of a USDA grader. The USDA grader will be responsible for certification of compliance with the requirements of this Specification for chilled chicken products; preparation, marinating, cooking, and slicing of the commodity; chicken fajita strips; freezing; packaging and packing; labeling and marking; net weight; and checkloading.

5. Product Temperature. The temperature of chicken and chicken products, cooked commodity, and the individually frozen commodity, unless otherwise specified herein, must comply with 9 C.F.R. § 381.66 and FSIS guidelines throughout all operations including transportation between plants.

6. USDA Sampling Option. USDA may select additional commodity for further inspection or may draw samples for laboratory analyses.

7. Chicken Products From Other Plants. Chilled chicken and chicken products may be transferred or obtained from other processing plants, provided they: (1) have been processed, handled, and identified in accordance with this Specification; and (2) comply with the freshly slaughtered, organoleptic, temperature, and other applicable requirements of this Specification as evidenced by USDA certification.

a. Type, class, and specific name of the product, part, or meat; date slaughtered; and the USDA-assigned plant number must be shown on each shipping container.

b. The chilled chicken and chicken products must be at an internal temperature not higher than 40 °F (4.4 °C) and not lower than 26 °F (-3.3 °C) when shipped from the origin plant and when received at the destination plant.

B. Requirements for Meat

1. Time Requirements. The chilled ready-to-cook chicken and bone-in, skin-on chicken parts must be fabricated into cooked commodity within 7 calendar days after the day the chickens are slaughtered. Within this 7-day timeframe, deboned meat from the chicken and chicken parts must be fabricated into cooked commodity within 4 days after deboning.

2. Maximum Temperature. The temperature of the carcasses or boneless parts, and meat must not exceed 55 °F (12.8 °C) at any time during the preparation and processing of these chicken products for use in the commodity.

3. Cooling Requirements. The meat which is not used in the commodity on a continuous basis after deboning, must be: (a) cooled by an FSIS approved method or cooling medium (e.g., use of CO₂ or N₂) and the internal product temperature lowered to not higher than 40 °F (4.4 °C) and not lower than 26 °F (-3.3 °C). Water, refrigerated water, slush ice and water, or ice used to cool or maintain the temperature of meat or skin must not be incorporated into the product. Liquid associated with normal product weepage is acceptable. No frozen or previously frozen chicken, chicken strips, or fajita meat may be used in the commodity.

4. Cooling Medium.

a. Cooling methods and medium approved by FSIS (e.g., use of carbon dioxide (CO₂) or liquid nitrogen (N₂)) may be used to maintain the temperature of the meat.

b. Water, refrigerated water, slush ice and water, or ice used to cool or maintain the temperature of the meat must not be incorporated into the commodity. Liquid associated with normal product weepage is acceptable.

5. Meat. The following kinds of chicken meat must be used to prepare the commodity. The meat must be: (a) boneless, skinless whole or half legs (one-half of the meat missing), or (b) boneless, skinless, whole or half drumsticks and/or thighs (one-half of the meat missing), otherwise hereafter known as “meat” or “dark chicken meat.”

6. Unacceptable Meat. No frozen or previously frozen meat may be used. Mechanically separated (comminuted), finely ground, flaked, or finely chopped meat cannot be used.

7. Bone and Skin. The bones and skin must be removed from the meat before use.

8. Organoleptic Requirements and Defects.

a. Organoleptic requirements. Boneless, skinless meat will be examined on a continuous basis for organoleptic requirements. If the meat does not comply with the organoleptic requirements, the meat the samples represent will be rejected for use in the commodity.

b. Defects. Boneless, skinless meat will be examined for defects on a sample basis.

(1) Prior to slicing or cutting into strips, 30 pieces of boneless, skinless meat will be sampled and examined separately for the defects (excluding bone, see II.B.8.b.(3)) shown in Table 1. The frequency of sampling and the number of defects allowed will be those outlined in the Poultry Programs Sample Plan Level 1. Separate examinations will be made for (a) bone and (b) other defects.

II.B.8.

(2) Regardless of the kind and number of defects found (within Table 1), any sample with bone or hard bone-like material will be cause for the rejection of the product the sample represents.

(3) If the sample has more defects than the maximum tolerance for the sample plan, the meat the sample represents will be rejected.

Table 1. Organoleptic Requirements and Defects for Meat

Organoleptic Requirements:	Criteria: The meat must: (1) Be free of rancidity; free of fruity, sulfide-like, cardboardy, tallowy, oily, metallic, chlorine, other foreign or off-odors. (2) Free of foreign materials (e.g. glass, paper, rubber, metal). (3) Show no evidence of mishandling or deterioration. (4) Have a bright color and show no evidence of dehydration or freezing and thawing.
Meat Defects:	
Bone:	Bone or hard bone-like material.
Other:	A boneless, skinless: thigh, drumstick, or leg with more than one-half of the meat missing. Moderate discolorations, cartilage, or blood clots. Lightly shaded discolorations exceeding an aggregate area equivalent to a circle with a diameter of 0.50 inch (1.27 cm). Slight discolorations are permitted, provided the discoloration does not detract from the overall appearance of the meat.
Defects for Boneless, Skinless Thighs:	Tendon or tendinous material.
Defects for Boneless, Skinless Drumsticks and Legs:	Tendon or tendinous material that is soft-like in texture and extends or is greater than 0.50 inch (1.27 cm) beyond the meat tissue.
Skin Defects:	A defect for skin is the presence of skin.

C. Formulation and Processing of the Commodity

1. Formulation.

- a. Formula. Proportions of ingredients required are as follows:

II.C.1.

	<u>Percent of Total</u>	
Boneless, Skinless Dark Meat (minimum)		84.00
Marinating Solution (maximum)		16.00
Water (maximum)	10.50	
Spices (in II.C.1.b.) (maximum)	4.00	
Starch(es)	1.00	
Sodium Phosphate(s) (maximum)	0.50	
		<u>100.00</u>

(1) Water may consist of water only or water and ice.

(2) Starch(es) must be an isolated soy protein and/or a modified food starch.

(3) Maximum percentage for sodium phosphate will include any phosphates used in the combined marinating solution and spice formulation. Amount and kind of restricted phosphates must comply with 9 C.F.R. § 381.147.

b. Spices. Proportions of spices must consist of the following:

	<u>Maximum Percent</u>
Salt	48.00
Sugar	18.00
Sodium phosphate(s)	16.00
Black pepper	10.00
Onion powder	10.00
Garlic powder	10.00
Chili powder	5.00
Binders (food starch)	5.00
Grilled and/or smoke flavoring	5.00
Citric acid/lemon juice/lime juice/vinegar	5.00
Red pepper	2.00
Other spices, extractives, or ingredients	<u>20.00</u>
	100.00

(1) The contractor must furnish the USDA grader a statement by the manufacturer certifying that the spices and spice amounts are in compliance with the spice formulation requirement prior to production.

(2) Processing aids (e.g., anti-caking, anti-dusting agents, or other manufacturing aids) are allowed if used and labeled in accordance with FSIS requirements. If processing agents are used, the ingredients and amount of ingredients listed in the formulations (II.C.1.a. and b.) must remain the same.

II.C.

2. Marinating. Chilled boneless, skinless meat must be marinated in a solution of water, spices, starch(es), and sodium phosphates in accordance with the formulation (II.C.1.a.) (percentages in II.C.1.a., otherwise hereafter known as “marinating solution”), before cooking.

a. The starch(es) and sodium phosphate must be thoroughly mixed with water. The spices must be the last ingredient added to the marinating solution.

b. The marinating solution must be incorporated into the meat by tumbling or massaging. The tumbling or massaging must be accomplished without shredding or mutilating the pieces of meat.

c. The marinating solution must not exceed 16 percent (i.e., marinade increases the weight of the fajita strips by a maximum of 16 percent over the original ready-to-cook weight).

3. Product Compliance. Formulated batches of meat and marinating solution which do not comply with the formula in II.C.1.a. will be rejected for use in the commodity.

D. Cooking, Slicing, and Freezing

1. Processing Sequence. The marinating, pressing, cooking, cutting into strips, and individual freezing of the commodity must be a continuous sequential process.

2. Uniform Thickness (Pressing). The marinated meat must be passed through a press to assist in creating an approximately uniform thickness.

3. Cooking and Grill Markings

a. The commodity must reach an internal temperature of at least 160 °F (71.1 °C) during cooking. The time and temperature of cooking must provide cooked commodity which complies with II.E.1.

b. Parallel grill markings are required on one surface of the meat/fajita strip.

4. Slicing Into Strips. The meat must be cut/sliced into fajita strips (strips). All cuts must be in a manner which will provide strips of whole muscle dark chicken meat with approximately smooth outer surfaces with no tears along the cut edges. These cuts may be made by mechanical means. The strips must be a minimum 0.375 inch (3/8 inch) (0.95 cm) in width.

5. Individual Freezing

a. The cooked commodity must be chilled and individually frozen so the individual fajita strips do not stick together after they are packaged and packed in shipping containers.

II.D.5.

b. Immediately after cooking is completed, the internal product temperature of the cooked commodity must be lowered continuously by an in-line chilling/freezing system at a rate of cooling which complies with FSIS temperature requirements for cooked product .

c. Commodity 72-hour freezing verification will be made as the commodity exits the in-line chilling/freezing system as follows:

(1) Individually frozen commodity exiting an in-line chilling/freezing system with internal product temperatures higher than 0 °F (-17.8 °C) must be packaged and placed in a freezer. The internal product temperature must be lowered to 0 °F (-17.8 °C) or lower within 72 hours from the time the commodity enters the freezer.

(2) Individually frozen commodity exiting an in-line chilling/freezing system with internal product temperatures 0 °F (-17.8 °C) or lower is in compliance with the 72-hour freezing requirement (in II.D.5.c.(1)).

(3) In all cases, the commodity must be placed in a freezer within 4 hours of packaging.

6. Reprocessing.

a. Product eligible for reprocessing. Raw marinated, or undercooked marinated boneless, skinless meat may be reprocessed by prebrowning or cooking.

b. Product ineligible for reprocessing. Cooked boneless, skinless meat or cooked fajita strips which do not meet the organoleptic requirements may not be reprocessed for use under this Specification.

E. Requirements for Cooked Commodity

1. Organoleptic Requirements. A sample of 10 cooked fajita strips will be sampled and examined for the organoleptic requirements shown in Table 2. If any sample of commodity does not comply with the organoleptic requirements, the commodity the sample represents will be rejected for use under this Specification.

Table 2. Organoleptic Requirements for Cooked Commodity

Organoleptic Requirements: Examined after cooking prior to freezing.	Criteria: (a) The commodity must be free of: (i) rancidity; (ii) metallic, overcooked, burnt, scorched, bitter, oxidized, stale, fruity, beany, oily, soapy, or other odors or flavors foreign to properly prepared and cooked chicken fajita strips; and (iii) foreign materials (e.g., glass, paper, rubber, metal). (b) The commodity must not be dry; that is, lack moistness or be devoid of moisture.
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II.E.

2. Metal Detection.

a. Requirements.

(1) The commodity must be examined by a metal detection device: (a) accepted by FSIS; and (b) capable of detecting metallic contaminants including, but not limited to, stainless steel shavings, metal clips, metal fragments from cutting equipment, and pieces of wire.

(2) The commodity must be presented correctly within the detection field pattern of the device. Procedures used must be appropriate for the dimensions, location, and pattern of the detection field, the “orientation effect” on the sensitivity of the device, the environmental conditions, and the commodity.

b. Operating efficiency and procedures. The operating efficiency of the metal detection device will be determined hourly by the USDA grader by placing a detection test strip with a sphere of 440 stainless steel in the center of the detection field pattern. Poultry Programs will provide the detection test strip with the stainless steel sphere of the specified diameter.

(1) The commodity must be examined: (a) layered prior to packaging; or after it is (b) packaged; or (c) packed in shipping containers.

(2) The USDA grader will use a detection test strip with: (a) a 1.50 mm (0.0591 inch) sphere for the examination of layered commodity, or (b) a 3.00 mm (0.1181 inch) sphere for commodity examined in a package or a shipping container.

c. Contaminated product. These guidelines do not relieve the contractor of the responsibility to provide a safe product. Commodity suspected of being contaminated with metal, or found to be contaminated with metal, will be handled in accordance with FSIS procedures.

d. Other detection procedures. Other procedures for examination of the commodity may be approved by the Deputy Administrator of Poultry Programs, in writing.

F. Packaging and Packing.

1. Materials. All packaging and packing materials must: (a) comply with the requirements of this Specification; (b) be clean and in new condition; and (c) not impart objectionable odors or flavors to the commodity.

a. Plastic-film bags.

(1) Plastic-film bags must be safe (cannot adulterate product or be injurious to health) for use in contact with food products. The safety of food-contact packaging materials will be determined by FSIS according to the criteria and procedures in 9 C.F.R. § 381.144.

(2) Plastic-film bags for packaging the commodity must be a low-density polyethylene film bag with a wall thickness of not less than 2 mil (0.002 inch). Any seams must provide the same protective qualities as the body of the bag. Plastic-film bags must have: (a) low-temperature flexibility (not brittle) and durability to resist stress-cracking caused by the temperatures of freezing and frozen storage, and (b) the impact strength, tensile strength, and tear resistance to protect the commodity from dehydration, freezer burn, or quality deterioration during the conditions of use.

(3) Metal wire ties, paper-coated wire ties, or staples must not be used for sealing plastic-film bags. Plastic-coated wire ties may be used, provided the wire and plastic are bonded so that under the conditions of use, the wire and plastic do not separate, the wire is not exposed, and the plastic does not crack or break. Further, the ties must be constructed to preclude damage to the packaging material and be of sufficient size and contrasting color to make them easily seen.

b. Shipping containers

(1) Requirements. Shipping containers must: (a) be a fiberboard container; (b) be of such size to pack the commodity without slack filling or bulging; (c) protect the commodity from contamination and against loss and damage; (d) withstand the variations in humidity and temperature during the conditions of use; and (e) have the combined facings weight, and the compression strength (edge crush value) to withstand the stresses of handling, shipping, stacking, and storage.

(2) Container bottom. Flaps on the bottom of a shipping container must be securely fastened so the bottom remains securely fastened when the top of the container is opened.

(3) Final closure. Final closure of the shipping containers must be secure and made with commercially acceptable filament-reinforced tape, plastic film packaging tape, non-metallic strapping, adhesive, or other similar types of materials that are applicable for cold temperature storage conditions and that provide for safe handling of the commodity. Steel or wire straps must not be used for the final closure. Staples must not be used for the final closing of shipping containers. Adhesive or staples cannot be used to fasten the top portion of telescope-style containers to the bottom portion. However, staples may be used to manufacture and to assemble the fiberboard shipping containers, provided the staples are fastened into the container and tightly clenched to eliminate sharp edges prior to packing the commodity into the shipping containers.

2. Packaging. Approximately 5 or 10 pounds (2.27 or 4.54 kg) of commodity must be packaged in a plastic-film bag. The bag must be of a length that can be readily and securely closed. The bag must be sealed or closed with a nonmetallic device (except for plastic coated wire ties) that will protect the commodity from contamination, dehydration, and freezer burn.

II.F.

3. Packing. Six 5-pound (2.27-kg) or three 10-pound (4.54-kg) bags with 30 pounds (13.61 kg) net weight of commodity must be packed in a fiberboard shipping container.

III. LABELING

A. Plastic-film Bags

Name and address of the contractor or processor must not be shown on packaging materials.

B. Shipping Containers

1. Labeling Provisions. Labeling and marking of the shipping containers for the commodity must be in accordance with this Specification. Labeling is subject to the provisions of 9 C.F.R. § 381.132(c). The name and address of the contractor or processor must not be shown on shipping containers.

2. Printing Requirements. Printed, stamped, and stenciled labeling and marking information must be water-fast, nonsmearing, of a contrasting color, clear, and readable.

3. Labeling Format. Any deviation from the labeling requirements in this Specification must be approved by the Contracting Officer, in writing, prior to start of production.

4. Recycle Symbol and Statement. The contractor shall place somewhere on the surface of each recyclable shipping container the recycle symbol shown in EXHIBIT 1. The statement "PLEASE RECYCLE" is to be placed under the symbol. The recycle symbol and statement must be legibly printed in permanent ink.

5. Universal Product Bar Code

a. A Universal Product Code (UPC), symbol and code, called Interleaved 2 of 5 (I 2/5), must appear on each shipping container. The complete code, including the check digit, must be printed in machine-readable and human-readable form. The start and stop indicators will be included in the bar codes. Printing, readability, and scanability of the bar code must be in accordance with UPC guidelines published by Uniform Code Council, Inc., 7887 Washington Village Drive, Suite 300, Dayton, Ohio 45459.

b. The contractor will use the code furnished by USDA. USDA has acquired a unique manufacturer's identification number for the commodity purchase programs and will use a this item code for the commodity purchased under this Specification. The contractors need not join Uniform Code Council, Inc.

c. The 14-digit UPC code for shipping containers of chicken fajita strips is:
1 07 15001 01563 2

III.B.5.

d. The UPC code must be placed in the lower right-hand corner of both side panels of the shipping container.

6. Labeling and Marking Information.

a. Requirements. The labeling and marking information must be preprinted, stamped, or stenciled on shipping containers. This information, in essentially the same layout, is provided in EXHIBIT 2, “Label Information For Shipping Containers of Chicken Fajita Strips.”

b. “END” and “SIDE” designations. For the purpose of labeling and marking, the “end” and “side” panels may relate to the shortest and longest dimensions of the shipping container at the discretion of the contractor/processor. However, the panels must alternate between “end” panel and “side” panel designation with the two side panels and two end panels being located on opposite panels of the shipping container.

7. TOP PANEL- Labeling and Marking. The following information must appear on the top panel of each shipping container:

a. Type and name, meat type, qualifying and ingredients statement. The commodity type and name must appear on the top panel of each shipping container. Product ingredients statement and labeling must be approved by FSIS.

(1) The type of meat (“Drumstick,” “Thigh,” and/or “Leg”) used and the ingredients statement for the product must appear on the top panel and on one side panel of the shipping container with the commodity type and name. Ingredients must be listed by proper name and in proper order in accordance with 9 C.F.R. § 381.118.

(2) **Qualifying statement(s) must be added (as applicable) if required by FSIS (e.g., “Smoke flavor.... added,” “Marinated with” etc.).

Frozen Fully Cooked Boneless, Skinless Chicken _____ Meat
CHICKEN FAJITA STRIPS

**

b. Storing instructions. The following storing instructions are required on the top panel of the shipping container:

PERISHABLE--KEEP FROZEN
KEEP AT ZERO DEGREE F (-17.8 °C) OR BELOW

c. Key points for handling commodity. Handling information is required on each shipping container of commodity. The “KEY POINTS FOR HANDLING” must be legibly printed on the top panel of each shipping container. This information, in essentially the same layout, is set out in EXHIBIT 2.

III.B.

8. ONE END Panel - Labeling and Marking. The following information must appear on one end of each shipping container:

a. Type and name, meat type, and qualifying statement. The commodity type and name must be printed on both end panels of each shipping container. The type of meat (“Drumstick,” “Thigh,” or “Leg”) used and **qualifying statement(s) (as applicable) III.B.7.a.) must be included. The words “CHICKEN FAJITA STRIPS” must be printed in letters at least 1 inch (2.54 cm) high:

Frozen Fully Cooked Boneless, Skinless Chicken _____ Meat
CHICKEN FAJITA STRIPS
**

b. Contract number and pack date. The following information may be preprinted, stamped, or stenciled on the shipping container, or on a separate pressure-sensitive label:

(1) Last five digits of the contract number as it appears in the acceptance wire.

(2) Date packed (month, day, and year).

c. Inspection mark and plant number. The USDA inspection mark and USDA-assigned plant number must be printed on the “one end” designated panel of each shipping container.

d. Net weight. The following net weight statement must be completed and printed on the “one end” designated panel of the shipping container:

_____ Bags Net Combined Weight 30 LBS. (13.61 KG)

e. Storing instructions. The following storing instructions must be printed on the “one end” designated panel of each shipping container:

KEEP FROZEN

9. ONE SIDE Panel - Labeling and Marking. The following information must be printed **on the side panel immediately to the right of the “one end” panel** containing the information designated in III.B.8. above.

a. Type, name, type of meat, qualifying statements, legend, and ingredients statement. The commodity type and name, type of meat (“Drumstick,” “Thigh,” or “Leg”) used, **qualifying statement(s) as applicable (III.B.7.a.), the ingredients statement, and the legend must be printed on one side of each shipping container.

Frozen Fully Cooked Boneless, Skinless, Chicken _____ Meat
CHICKEN FAJITA STRIPS

**

Ingredients:

Distributed by USDA in cooperation with State and local
or tribal governments for domestic food assistance programs.
Not To Be Sold Or Exchanged.

b. USDA symbol. The USDA symbol, copy on back of Specification, is to be a minimum of 2.25 inches (5.72 cm) in height, and must be printed on each shipping container.

c. UPC code. The UPC code (see III.B.5.) must be printed on the lower right-hand corner of both side panels of each shipping container.

10. THE OTHER END Panel - Labeling and Marking. For each shipping container, the following information must appear on the end opposite the panel designated “one end:”

a. Type and name. The commodity type and name is required on each shipping container. **The qualifying statement is not required on this end of the shipping container.** The following is required, and the words “CHICKEN FAJITA STRIPS” must be printed in letters at least 1 inch (2.54 cm) high:

Frozen Fully Cooked
CHICKEN FAJITA STRIPS

b. USDA symbol. The USDA symbol (see III.B.9.b.) is required on the end opposite the panel designated “one end.”

11. THE OTHER SIDE Panel - Labeling and Marking. For each shipping container, the following information must appear on the side opposite the panel designated “one side:”

a. Type, name, qualifying statements, and legend. The commodity type and name, type of meat used, **qualifying statement(s) as applicable (III.B.7.a.), and the legend (see III.B.9.a.) must appear on the side opposite the panel designated “one side.” **The ingredients statement is not required on this side of the shipping container.**

b. UPC code. The UPC code (see III.B.5.) must be printed on the lower right-hand corner of both side panels of each shipping container.

12. Inventory Control Label. The processor may use a pressure-sensitive label to place any additional information (including bar codes) for processor inventory control purposes. This label may be applied somewhere on the surface of the shipping container. The label must not:

III.B.12.

(a) contain the contractor or processor name and address, or (b) cover or conflict with the labeling requirements of this Specification.

C. F.a.s. Vessel Deliveries

F.a.s. vessel deliveries that are not source loaded in a seavan are required to show the final destination's overseas address as provided in the Notice to Deliver. The address must be clearly printed on at least two sides of each pallet.

IV. FINAL EXAMINATION OF PACKAGED AND PACKED COMMODITY

A. Material and Net Weight Compliance

1. Verification of Materials and Defects.

a. Verification of packaging and packing materials. The contractor must verify compliance with packaging, packing, and marking material requirements by furnishing the USDA grader the following certification on company stationery signed by a person authorized to do so by the contractor:

“(I) (We) certify that the packaging, packing, and marking materials used for any commodity presented for acceptance under the terms of the Commodity Specification for Chicken Fajita Strips dated December 2000, comply or will comply with the terms of this Commodity Specification.

Name _____

Title _____”

One certification is adequate for all production under this Specification.

b. Packaging defects. Packages in a delivery unit will be examined for defects that affect protection, expose product, or permit dehydration or freezer burn, or quality deterioration during storage, such as tears, holes, or improperly sealed or closed packages.

c. Packing defects. Shipping containers in a delivery unit will be examined for condition, labeling, and marking defects according to the United States Standards for Condition of Food Containers.

d. Tolerance for defects. If samples of packaged commodity or the shipping containers in a delivery unit have more defects than the maximum tolerance for the applicable Poultry Programs' sample plan, the delivery unit will be rejected.

2. Net Weight.

a. A purchase unit or delivery unit will total 39,000 pounds (17,690 kg) net, or multiples thereof.

b. Each delivery unit, except as provided in IV.A.2.g. below, will be examined for compliance with the net weight requirements at time of checkloading.

c. The tare weight of all packing materials will be determined by weighing a representative sample of all packaging components such as plastic-film bags, clips, and fiberboard containers.

d. Fifteen (15) shipping containers will be selected at random from a delivery unit to determine net weight. The total net weight of the 15 shipping containers must be equal to or greater than 450 pounds (204.12 kg).

e. If the total net weight is less than 450 pounds (204.12 kg), the delivery unit will be rejected.

f. A rejected delivery unit may be reworked and reoffered one time only. However, if an individual shipping container in the sample of the reworked delivery unit has a net weight less than 30 pounds (13.61 kg) the delivery unit will be rejected.

g. As an alternative to test weighing at time of checkloading, the contractor may request on-line verification of net weights. Upon receiving the request, a Federal-State supervisor will determine that the facilities and procedures are in accordance with the applicable Poultry Programs' instructions for this Specification.

B. Prerequisites for Loading and Shipping Frozen Commodity

1. Visual Inspection. Frozen cooked commodity showing any evidence of defrosting, refreezing, or freezer deterioration will be rejected for use under this Specification.

2. Internal Product Temperature.

a. Requirements. The internal product temperature of the frozen cooked commodity must be 2 °F (-16.7 °C) or lower at the time of loading. Delivery units with internal product temperatures exceeding 2 °F (-16.7 °C) and up to 5 °F (-15 °C) will be tentatively rejected. Tentatively rejected delivery units may be returned to the freezer and the temperature reduced to 2 °F (-16.7 °C) or lower and reoffered one time only. Delivery units exceeding 5 °F (-15 °C) or delivery units that have been tentatively rejected and exceed 2 °F (-16.7 °C) when reoffered will be rejected for use under this Specification.

IV.B.2.

b. Optional temperature verification. As an option to verifying internal product temperature at time of loading, the contractor may request an alternate method utilizing product temperature sensing devices. If this option is selected, a Federal-State supervisor will determine that the facilities, equipment, procedures, and the contractors' current level of freezing compliance are in accordance with the established guidelines outlined in the applicable Poultry Programs' instructions for this Specification.

C. Inspection and Checkloading

1. Requirements. Inspection for contract compliance will be made by a USDA representative, in accordance with 7 C.F.R. part 70, 9 C.F.R. part 381, and this Specification, at the site of processing, both during and after processing and packaging. A USDA representative may select samples for laboratory analyses or inspect the commodity at any point in transit and after delivery to point of destination. Inspection records must be complete and made available to USDA, as requested, to assure contract compliance.

2. Procedures. Inspection and checkloading required by Articles 54 and 55 of USDA-1 must be performed by a USDA grader. Procedures to be followed and a schedule of fees for these services may be obtained by contacting the nearest Grading Branch field office or the Chief of the Grading Branch, Poultry Programs, AMS, USDA, Room 3938-S, STOP 0258, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-0258, telephone (202) 720-3271. The quality, quantity, weight, packaging, packing, and checkloading of the commodity must be evidenced by USDA certificates issued by the USDA grader. The contractor must not ship the commodity unless informed by the USDA grader that the designated commodity to be shipped meets contract specifications.

V. UNITIZATION

Each delivery unit must be unitized (palletized and stretchwrapped) and comply with the following:

A. Pallets

Pallets must be good quality, wood, 48 inches x 40 inches, nonreversible, flush stringer, and partial fourway entry. Each pallet of shipping containers must be stretchwrapped with plastic film in a manner that will secure each container and layer of containers on the pallet. Palletized product must be loaded in a way that will prevent shifting and damage to the containers of product.

B. Pallet Exchange

Contractors may arrange for pallet exchange with consignees; however, USDA is in no way responsible for such arrangements.

VI. SHIPMENT AND DELIVERY

Shipment and delivery must be made in accordance with this Specification, the applicable Announcement and Invitation, and Articles 56, 57, and 64 of USDA-1, as amended by the Announcement. In addition, the contractor must adhere to the following provisions:

A. Contract Compliance Stamp

Each shipping container must be identified with a USDA Contract Compliance stamp with the applicable certificate number. A USDA grader, or other authorized personnel under the supervision of the USDA grader, will stamp one end of each shipping container prior to shipment. If there is inadequate space available on either end of the shipping container, the stamp may be applied to a side of the container.

B. Grading Certificate

A copy of the original USDA Poultry Products Grading Certificate issued at time of checkloading must accompany each shipment.

1. Railcar or Piggyback. If shipment is by rail or piggyback, the certificate must be placed in the railcar or trailer for easy access to the USDA grader, warehouseman, or consignee, as applicable.

2. Trucks. If shipment is by truck, the driver must, upon delivery, give the certificate to the USDA grader, warehouseman, or consignee, as applicable.

C. Loading and Sealing of Vehicles

Loading must be in accordance with good commercial practices and the sealing must be done at origin under the supervision of a USDA grader.

1. Railcar. Each railcar must be sealed. The contractors are responsible for arranging railcar deliveries of more than one delivery unit so that each delivery unit contained in the same railcar can be completely separated and sealed.

2. Truck or Piggyback. Truck or piggyback shipments must be sealed at origin. A delivery unit shipped by truck or piggyback which includes split deliveries to two destinations will not require separation by sealing each drop.

D. Delivery Notification

Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 56(c) of USDA-1, as amended by the applicable Announcement, the contractor must follow the instructions in the Notice to Deliver issued by the Kansas City Commodity Office (KCCO) concerning delivery notification. Such notification and information of impending delivery are vital in proper execution of delivery. The contractor must notify the State distributing agency and the consignee of shipment per instructions in the Notice

VI.D.

to Deliver. For rail or piggyback shipments, notification shall be made on the day of shipment. For truck shipments, notification of the estimated arrival time should be made as far in advance of delivery as possible. In addition, for truck or piggyback shipments, the contractor must request and keep scheduled appointment(s). Unloading appointments for truck or piggyback shipments must be requested from the consignee contact party(ies) at least 24 hours in advance of delivery.

1. In-Plant Deliveries. When in-plant delivery is made, the contractor must notify the appropriate resident USDA grader and furnish applicable information.

2. Delivery In Storage. Delivery may be made in store provided the destination in the Notice to Deliver and the place the contractor has the commodity in storage are the same. Inspection and certification by a USDA grader are also required for transfers in store.

E. Split Deliveries

The contractor is responsible to deliver the quantity stated on each Notice to Deliver to each destination. Contractors must provide to the USDA Grader, at time of shipment, the number of boxes and pounds for each destination.

At the option of the contractor, a purchase unit with two Notices to Deliver (split deliveries) for two different destinations may be delivered on two separate trucks provided each truck ships the total quantity stated on the Notice to Deliver. Any additional costs will accrue to the contractor's account.

VII. DESTINATION EXAMINATION

The cost of a destination examination, before or after delivery, by a USDA grader on accepted product will be for the account of USDA. Costs for destination examinations of rejected delivery units will be for the account of the contractor. The USDA origin grader will make arrangements for destination examination prior to delivery.

A. Commodity Requirements

Before acceptance by consignee, the commodity may be examined by a USDA grader on a spot-check basis for temperature, condition, identity, and when applicable, count. The commodity may be examined for conformance to contract provisions at any time required by the Contracting Officer.

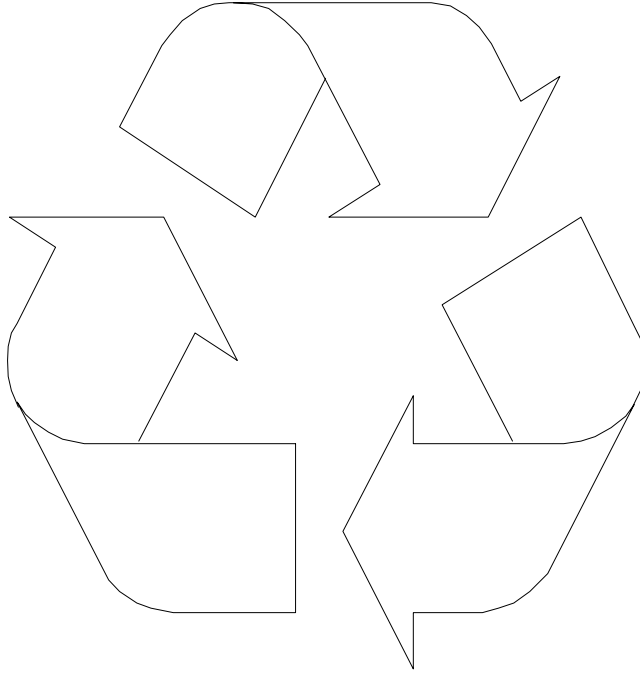
B. Temperature

The commodity must arrive at destination at an average internal product temperature not to exceed 10 °F (-12.2 °C) with no individual temperature exceeding 15 °F (-9.4 °C). Commodity not meeting these requirements will be rejected for use under this Specification.

Howard M. Magwire, Acting Deputy Administrator
Poultry Programs

Attachment

EXHIBIT 1
“Please Recycle” Symbol and Statement






**PLEASE
RECYCLE**

EXHIBIT 2

Label Information for Shipping Containers of Chicken Fajita Strips

Marking Information: Shipping containers shall be marked substantially as shown below. See the labeling requirements in III.A and III.B. for more information. Markings must be preprinted, stamped, or stenciled on containers, water-fast, nonsmearing, of a contrasting color, clear, and readable. The type of meat used (“Drumstick,” “Thigh,” and/or “Leg”) must be printed on each shipping container. The words “CHICKEN FAJITA STRIPS,” on each end, must be in letters at least 1 inch (2.54 cm) high. The USDA symbol is to be a minimum of 2.25 inches (5.72 cm) in height. The UPC 14-digit I 2/5 bar code (1 07 15001 01563 2), symbol and code, must be shown in the lower right-hand corner of both side panels. The recycle symbol and statement must be legibly printed somewhere on the surface of each recyclable shipping container.

<p style="text-align: center;">CHICKEN FAJITA STRIPS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Frozen Fully Cooked</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">KEY POINTS FOR HANDLING</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Frozen Fully Cooked Boneless, Skinless Chicken _____ Meat CHICKEN FAJITA STRIPS</p> <p>Ingredients:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Handle Properly To Avoid Spoilage Or Possible Food Poisoning.</p> <p>Do Not Thaw Before Heating. If Chicken Fajita Strips Thaw Accidentally--Heat And Serve-- Do Not Refreeze.</p> <p>PRODUCT: The chicken fajita strips are made with dark chicken meat. They are precooked and are ready to heat and serve.</p> <p>HEATING: Place frozen chicken fajita strips in a single layer on sheet pans. Heat to an internal temperature of 160 °F (71 °C). Reheating temperatures and times are critical to product acceptability.</p> <p>Suggested Instructions Are: Deck Oven 350 °F (177 °C) -- 25 to 30 min Convection Oven 400 °F (205 °C) -- 15 to 20 min</p> <p>SERVING: Serve promptly. Refrigerate leftovers and use within 2 days.</p> <p>YIELD: Two ounces of chicken fajita strips provides approximately 1 ounce of cooked chicken.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Nutrition Facts Panel May Be Placed Here.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Frozen Fully Cooked Boneless, Skinless Chicken _____ Meat CHICKEN FAJITA STRIPS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ingredients: Distributed By USDA in cooperation with State and local or tribal governments for food assistance programs. Not To Be Sold Or Exchanged.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">UPC Code</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Frozen Fully Cooked Boneless, Skinless Chicken _____ Meat CHICKEN FAJITA STRIPS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Distributed by USDA in cooperation with State and local or tribal governments for food assistance programs. Not To Be Sold Or Exchanged.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">UPC Code</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">PERISHABLE--KEEP FROZEN</p> <p style="text-align: center;">KEEP AT ZERO DEGREE F (-17.8 °C)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR BELOW</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Frozen Fully Cooked Boneless, Skinless Chicken _____ Meat CHICKEN FAJITA STRIPS</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p style="text-align: center;">KEEP FROZEN</p> <p>___ Bags Net Combined Weight 30 LBS. (13.61 KG)</p> <p>CONTRACT NO. _____ DATE PACKED Month, Day, Year</p>